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Studia Rudolphina
Research Center for Visual Arts and Culture in the Age of Rudolf II

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The Center launched its activities in January 2000, as a part of the Institute of Art History of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic in Prague. It fosters and carries out research projects focused on art and culture in the age of Rudolf II (with occasional overlaps reaching from ca. 1520 to ca. 1620), and accordingly to this mission, it organizes lectures on Rudolfine topics, keeps a specialized library and collects pertinent visual and verbal documentation. Once a year, the Center publishes a peer-reviewed journal *Studia Rudolphina*.

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1. Bartholomeus Spranger, Triumph of Wisdom (Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien)

Bartholomeus Spranger's *Triumph of Wisdom* as an Allegory of the Re-Evaluation of the Art of Painting in Sixteenth-Century Prague

Eri Kawakami

The Triumph of Wisdom (Fig. 1) was painted by Bartholomeus Spranger, a court painter of the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II and a guild painter in Prague, and is generally considered one of his greatest works. Recent studies tend to date it in the latter half of the 1590s in terms of its style;[1] thus the painting is probably from the imperial collection,[2] since Spranger was *Kammermaler* of Rudolf II at that time.[3] While all the figures in an engraving by Aegidius Sadeler – who was only appointed as a court engraver of Rudolf II in 1597, so that this would have to be engraved after that year[4] – of a similar character (Fig. 2)[5] have apparent attributes, some figures around central Minerva in the background of the painting lack attributes or, if any, have obscure attributes. Such figures have gathered less attention. Thus this study aims to reconsider the subject of the background of the painting consisting of Minerva and the figures which appear at the sides, taking into account and considering the meaning and the relationship between all the figures there; thus, this reconsideration will reveal that the background strongly reflects the movement of the age re-evaluating the status of painting in Prague, which emerged in late-sixteenth-century Prague, as well as in other European countries.

This work was supported by the Grant-in-Aid for JSPS Research Fellow. I would like to express my sincere thanks to Lubomír Konečný, David Freedberg and Saburo Kimura.

1 Whereas Oberhuber dated the painting to about 1591, Fučíková suggested its date to be about 1595, in the light of the change of Spranger's style after the arrival of Josef Heinz and Hans von Aachen in Prague in 1591 and of the relationship with von Aachen's painting in the Gallery Heim in Paris. Konrad Oberhuber, *Die stilistische Entwicklung im Werk Bartholomäus Sprangers* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Vienna, 1958), p. 151; *Prag um 1600*, pp. 280–281, cat. no. 159 (Eliška Fučíková). More recently, a later date has been adopted: Müller dated it to about 1596 without giving reasons, and Metzler placed it in the period, 1596–1600, in terms of the style. Jürgen Müller, Per aspera ad astraeam: Eine neue ikonographische Interpretation von B. Sprangers Triumph der Weisheit, in *Die Malerei Antwerpens – Gattungen, Meister, Wirkungen: Studien zur flämischen Kunst des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts: Internationales Kolloquium, Wien 1993*, ed. by Ekkehard Mai and Karl Schütz (Cologne, 1994), pp. 46–57 (46); Sally Metzler, *Bartholomeus Spranger: Splendor and Eroticism in Imperial Prague: the Complete Works*, exh. cat. (New York, 2014), pp. 138, 140–141, cat. no. 67.

2 *Prag um 1600*, pp. 280–281, cat. no. 159. Diez points out that the painting is listed in the 1747–1748 inventory of *Schatzkammer* without showing the inventory number. Ernest Diez, Der Hofmaler Bartholomäus Spranger, *JKSW* 28 (1909–10), pp. 93–152 (142). The following description in the inventory, however, seems to correspond to the painting: "Ein grosses stuckh, worauf die Pallas mit denen zugethanen künsten, von Spranger". – Heinrich Zimerman, Inventare, Acten und Regesten aus der Schatzkammer des allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses, *JKSAK* 10 (1889), pp. CCI–CCCXXIV (CCXLIV, reg. no. 6243, no. 36). In 1782, it became a collection at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. See *Rudolf II and Prague*, p. 406, cat. no. I.84 (Eliška Fučíková).

3 He worked for the emperor in his chamber in the Prague castle and took little private commissions during the period. Carel van Mander, *The Lives of Illustrious Netherlandish and German Painters*, ed. Hessel Miedema, I (Doornspijk, 1994), pp. 350–351 (fol. 273r); V (1998), p. 109. According to a contemporary merchant Hans Ulrich Krafft, who visited the castle in 1584, the emperor sometimes asked Spranger to correct his painting. *Reisen und Gefangenschaft Hans Ulrich Kraffts: aus der Originalhandschrift*, ed. Konrad Dieterich Haszler (Stuttgart, 1861), pp. 388–389; *Kaufmann*, pp. 18, 32.

4 For the engraving, see Oberhuber (note 1), p. 292, no. 77; *Prag um 1600*, pp. 280–281, cat. no. 159; Dorothy Limouze, Aegidius Sadeler (c. 1570 – 1629): Drawings, Prints and Art Theory (Ph. D. Dissertation, Princeton, 1990), pp. 149–150, 224–225; *Rudolf II and Prague*, p. 460, cat. no. I.347 (Dorothy Limouze); *Des Kaisers Kulturhauptstadt: Linz um 1600*, ed. Peter Assmann, exh. cat. (Linz, 2012), pp. 266–267, cat. no. 6.6.31; *Rudolf II. a mistři grafického umění = Rudolf II and Masters of Printmaking*, eds. Alena Volrábová and Blanka Kubíková, exh. cat. (Prague, 2012), pp. 66–67, 166; Metzler (note 1), pp. 316–317, cat. no. 202.

5 Although the print is similar to the painting, there are many differences between them. The following study focuses on the differences. Müller (note 1), pp. 46–57.

2. Aegidius Sadeler II after Bartholomeus Spranger, Triumph of Wisdom over Ignorance (New York, The Metropolitan Museum)

Identification of the Figures which appear in The Triumph of Wisdom

The painting shows many figures which is likely the cause of the breadth of the interpretations. Minerva, with Medusa at her breast, is victoriously standing on a central pedestal, setting her foot on the neck of Ignorance, a naked human figure with donkey ears. Over her head, two putto offer her a laurel wreath and a palm leaf, celebrating her victory. Her pedestal shows the head of a Capricorn, the zodiac sign of the Roman Emperor Augustus and of his modern equivalent, Rudolf II. Ten figures are surrounding the pedestal. In front of it is the helmeted war goddess Bellona at the left, and Calliope or Clio at the right, with a laurel crown on her head, opening a book and holding a pencil. To the right of the pedestal are three personifications of the arts, namely Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, bearing their tools.[6] Most of the figures to the left are without attributes, thus making it difficult to identify them, other than Mercury with a petasos and a scroll, and Urania or Astronomy holding an astrolabe. In order to decipher this composition, we first need to identify all the figures. First we should decipher the figures for which we have no doubt, then we should move on to those with obscure attributes, looking over former interpretations relevant to the identification of these figures. For some of these figures, their identities have changed over the years, although the interpretations of the work have been based on them.

The previous interpretations of this painting's meaning have mainly focused on figures of whom we have no doubt of identification: Minerva treading on Ignorance, three personifications of the visual arts, and Mercury. The pose of victorious Minerva attracts most attention. Oberhuber noted that Minerva conquering Ignorance belongs to the tradition of psychomachia, the battle between virtue and vice, and the similarity between the posture of Minerva and of the resurrected Christ in the *Epitaph of Nikolaus Müller* (Fig. 3) leads to the neo-platonic meaning.[7] Yet, opposed to reading "the deeper philosophical implications" in the formal parallel, Kaufmann classified the posture of Minerva as a triumph type, taking into consideration the common posture of a central figure in the *Allegory of the Triumph of the Habsburg Empire over the Turks* (c. 1604–1610, the Prague Castle Picture Gallery).[8] Reitz argued further about the parallel between Minerva and Christ in the epitaph, but in the light of the sensual depiction of their bodies;

6 Ignorance's leg hides most parts of the attribute for Sculpture, but the personifications of the arts are often depicted together as the three Graces. Thus the figure between Painting and Architecture would be Sculpture, as it is usually pointed out.

7 Oberhuber (note 1), pp. 151–152; Teréz Gerszi, Die humanistischen Allegorien der rudolfinischen Meister, in *Evolution générale et développements régionaux en histoire de l'art: Actes du XXIIe Congrès International d'Histoire de l'Art*, ed. by György Rózsa (Budapest, 1972), pp. 755–762 (760).

8 Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, Empire Triumphant: Notes on an Imperial Allegory by Adrian de Vries, *Studies in the History of Art* 8 (1978), pp. 63–75 (71, note 19).

they convey their own meaning in each context using almost the same pose, thus the secular and religious imagery are interchangeable through their sensual pose.[9] On the other hand, Müller paid attention to the changing pose of Minerva between the painting and the engraving of this work.[10]

Oberhuber also devoted much space to the three personifications of the visual arts.[11] He thinks that the painter intended to classify the three personifications of the visual arts under nine muses, to which a number of figures around the pedestal, except for Bellona, correspond. Among them, six figures remain without the three Visual Arts. The number is not enough to make a correspondence with the seven liberal arts, neither is the attribute of Calliope appropriate to the liberal arts, therefore he mentions that it seems to indicate the struggle for the higher position of the arts. In 1969, he developed this idea further.[12] He associates the presence of the three visual arts with the increased appearance of Minerva in Spranger's works in the 1590s, and thus this painting would have a link with an exalted status of the arts.

In the case of Mercury, the pedestal on which Minerva is standing symbolised him in earlier interpretations.[13] On the basis of Oberhuber's suggestion, Gerszi pointed out that Minerva standing on Mercury as a pedestal symbolises the unit of Sapientia and Virtus, the theme of Hermathena.[14] Moreover, Kaufmann emphasised an encyclopaedic character of Hermathena and saw the painting as a Hermathenic allegory.[15] A new identification of Mercury is, however, proposed by Müller.[16] He found the male figure wearing a winged hat to be Mercury, at the foot of Minerva.

When scholars take up the other figures which have ambiguous attributes, particularly at the left of the pedestal, they are usually taken to represent muses or the liberal arts in their interpretations, for example in Oberhuber's study, as stated above. However, after

3. Bartholomeus Spranger, Epitaph of Nikolaus Müller (Národní galerie Praha)

the finding suggested by Müller, Oberhuber's remark on counting figures around the pedestal inevitably cannot be accepted. He compares the nine figures surrounding Minerva, except for Bellona, with the nine muses, but one of the nine figures turns out to be Mercury and there are only eight figures now remaining. Are the canonical numbers, such as seven or

9 Evelyn Reitz, *Discordia concors: Kulturelle Differenzerfahrung und ästhetische Einheitsbildung in der Prager Kunst um 1600* (Berlin, 2015), pp. 234–278.

10 Müller (note 1), pp. 46–57.

11 Oberhuber (note 1), p. 153.

12 *Kaufmann*, p. 266.

13 Oberhuber (note 1), p. 152, note 7.

14 Gerszi (note 7), p. 760.

15 Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, The Eloquent Artist: Towards an Understanding of the Stylistics of Painting at the Court of Rudolf II, *Leids Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 1 (1982), pp. 119–148 (125).

16 Müller (note 1), pp. 49–50.

nine corresponding to the liberal arts or muses actually avoided here, as Müller says?[17] I would suggest here to consider the number of figures only in the background. It seems more natural and appropriate to deal with figures in the background separately from the foreground, which is composed of two busts. My suggestion is based on the fact that in a probable template for this painting, the *Epitaph of Nikolaus Müller,* the composition divides the sacred in the background and the secular in the foreground.

In addition, when looking at the studies mentioned above, Minerva often plays a central role in the subjects together with the other personifications. I assume, therefore, that the background has multiple subjects related to Minerva. Before I turn to discuss this, I will take a closer look at how much Spranger was involved in the movement for the higher status of the arts in Prague, in order to consider whether it is adequate or not to apply subjects relevant to Minerva to Spranger's works.

Spranger's Engagement with the Painters' Status in Rudolfine Prague

Two important historical contexts around the time when the work was produced have been accepted: The Turkish War (1592–1606) and the granting of the Letter of Majesty by Rudolf II to Prague painters' guild in 1595 proclaiming painting as an art, not as a craft. Although Bellona, a goddess of war, in the foreground, would be relevant to the Turkish War, there is nothing to symbolise this war concretely in the background, such as a turban or a curved sword depicted in the paintings by Rudolfine artists.[18] On the contrary, the latter seems to be more appropriate to the background portraying the personifications. Previous studies have referred to the connection between the painting and the 1595 letter, as Müller briefly pointed out that the date of the painting, 1595, suggested by Fučíková, corresponds to the year the letter was issued.[19] However, little study concerning the painting has been done to actually explore Spranger's activities at the time and the circumstances in Prague in detail. In this chapter, I will discuss the movement that strived to re-evaluate the status of painting in Prague and how he got involved.

Neither art theories were written nor art academies founded in Rudolphine Prague, but court artists and the emperor himself had contact with contemporary art theorists who had this idea to re-evaluate painting as a liberal art, which in turn had a great impact on the artists.[20] Thus the art-works in Prague during this period attempted to grant the status of liberal arts to the visual arts. Such claims, as Kaufmann suggested, caused the following changes in the social and economic status of the artists in Prague.[21] First, Rudolf II rendered the Letter of Majesty to the painters' guild of the Lesser Town and the Old Town in Prague on 27 April 1595, which declared painting as art. The guild in the late sixteenth century consisted of various craftsmen; the main professions within the guild were painters, glassmakers, and embroiders who participated in 1594.[22] The letter not only reaffirmed the old privilege granted by Louis Jagiello and Ferdinand I, but also newly confirmed the participation of embroiders, elevation of the status of painting, and redesign of the coat of arms.[23] The following extract makes the letter historically important: "Because their art and mastery [i.e. painting] is very different from

17 Ibidem, p. 49.

18 For instance, such symbols are found in Hans von Aachen's *Allegory* (c. 1598, Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie) and *Allegory on the Reign of Rudolf II* (1603, Národní galerie Prague) by Dirck de Quade van Ravesteyn.

19 Müller (note 1), p. 51.

20 Kaufmann 1982 (note 15), pp. 123, 142; *Kaufmann*, pp. 44, 122; Robert John Weston Evans, *Rudolf II and His World: A Study in Intellectual History, 1576–1612* (Oxford, 1973), pp. 163–164.

21 Kaufmann 1982 (note 15), pp. 127ff.

22 For the Prague painters' guild from late sixteenth century to early seventeenth century, see Karel Chytil, *Malířstvo pražské XV. a XVI. věku a jeho cechovní kniha staroměstská z let 1490–1582* (Prague, 1906); *Kniha protokolů pražského malířského cechu z let 1600–1656*, ed. Martin Halata (Prague, 1996); *Umění a mistrovství: Pražská malířská bratrstva 1348–1783*, ed. Tomáš Sekyrka, exh. cat. (Prague, 1997); Michal Šroněk, *Pražští malíři 1600–1656: Mistři, tovaryši, učedníci a štolíři v Knize Staroměstského malířského cechu: Biografický slovník* (Prague, 1997); Michal Šroněk, Painters in Prague between the Guild and the Court ca. 1595–1650, *Rudolf II, Prague and the World: Papers from the International Conference Prague, 2–4 September, 1997*, eds. Lubomír Konečný, Baket Bukovinská and Ivan Muchka (Prague, 1998), pp. 216–219; Michal Šroněk, Privileg Rudolfs II. von 1595: Nochmals und anders, *Studia Rudolphina* 2 (2002), pp. 16–28.

23 The original text in Czech was published by Chytil (note 22), pp. 310–314. It has been translated into German since 1732. Heinrich Zimerman, Urkunden, Acten und Regesten aus dem Archiv

other handicrafts ... it shall, from the date of this letter ... no longer be regarded or described as a craft by anybody, but rather shall be termed altogether the art of painting."[24] The emperor declared the superior position of painters through privileges, granted for the first time to the painters' guild since its foundation in the fourteenth century. Whereas this did not dramatically change their actual status in the guild, it inspired painters in the neighbouring countries as well as the creativity of painters in Prague.[25] Spranger redesigned the coat of arms of the guild responsive to the mention. Minerva is a substitute for the traditional female Moor in the centre of the new coat of arms, in order to indicate the intellectual ability of painting as it has been often pointed out.[26] The second change, the ennoblement of artists, made them free from the restriction of the guild, but also officially recognised the higher status of the arts. Rudolf II ennobled many artists particularly in the 1580s and the 1590s.[27]

These changes such as the issuing of the 1595 letter and the ennobling of artists naturally influenced Spranger and his works too, since he belonged both to the guild and to the court in Prague, an uncommon fact in itself. He was appointed a court artist of Rudolf II in 1581,[28] and settled in Prague in 1584. He then participated in the painters' guild of the Lesser Town where he lived, on 24 June, 1584.[29] Few surviving documents, however, record his activities in the guild,[30] except for his most famous activity there, where he redesigned the coat of arms of the guild, which was allowed by the 1595 letter. Due to his belonging to both the guild and the court, it is possible that Spranger mediated between them according to Konečný and Šroněk.[31] The latter scholar also assumes that Spranger might have been involved in the issuing of the 1595 letter with Matyáš Hutský, a former court painter of Ferdinand of Tyrol and the then head of the Old Town guild.[32] This seems right, judging from the aforementioned fact that he redesigned the coat of arms. But also from the following reasons: the 1595 letter was likely to be known in association with his name; he had personal contact with art theorists such as Carel van Mander and Federico Zuccari;[33] and he made many works of art related to the status of the artists in Prague as I will later describe in detail. In a letter dating from 1609 received from the painters' guild in Hamburg, they asked the Prague painters' guild for a copy of the 1595 letter, mentioning the "waapenbrif" improved by Rudolf II "durch befürderung der ernvesten und kunstreichen herrn Bartholomaei Sprangers".[34]

des K. K. Ministeriums des Innern, *JKSAK* 7 (1888), II, pp. XV–LXXXIV (XXXIX–XLI, reg. no. 4607). For studies regarding the 1595 letter, see *Prag um 1600*, p. 209, cat. no. 88 (E. Fučíková); *Rudolf II and Prague*, p. 682, cat. no. V.189 (M. Halata and H. J. Leopold); Šroněk 1998 (note 22), pp. 216–219; Šroněk 2002 (note 22), pp. 16–28; B. Ernest-Martinec and H. Miedema, Der Majestätsbrief Rudolfs II. für die Prager Maler vom 27. April 1595 und seine Implikationen rund um dem Begriff Kunst, *Studia Rudolphina* 5 (2005), pp. 32–39; H. Miedema, Rudolfs II. Würdigung von Maler und Malerei, *Studia Rudolphina* 6 (2006), pp. 69–74.

24 Abridged and translated by Lubomír Konečný, Picturing the Artist in Rudolfine Prague, in *Rudolf II and Prague*, pp. 107–121 (107). This extract is in Chytil (note 22), p. 313; Zimerman 1888 (note 23), p. XL.

25 For examples of inspiring the nearby countries, see Šroněk 2002 (note 22), p. 23.

26 The 1595 letter describes the old and new coat of arms. Chytil (note 22), p. 313; Zimerman 1888 (note 23), pp. XL–XLI. Spranger's design are lost, but Georg Gabriel Mayer depicted a miniature after it in 1631. *Kaufmann*, p. 269, cat. no. 20.61; *Prag um 1600*, p. 209, cat. no. 88; Šroněk 2002 (note 22), p. 20. Also see the literatures on the 1595 letter in note 23.

27 M. Warnke, *The Court Artist: On the Ancestry of the Modern Artist*, trans. David McLintock (Cambridge, 1993), p. 170; *Kaufmann*, p. 42.

28 Diez (note 2), p. 96; *Kaufmann*, p. 249.

29 Fahrenschon organized an inventory of all the members of the painters' guild in Prague in 1714, which is now lost. Spranger is listed on page 7, on 24 June 1584, "Barholomäus Spranger von Antorf aus Niederlandt, kaisers Rufolfi hofmaler, Kleinseitner maler". Chytil (note 22), p. 51; Rudolf Kuchynka, Fahrenschonovy výpisy z knih a listin staroměstského pořádku malířského, *Památky archeologické* XXXI (1919), pp. 14–24 (16); Diez (note 2), p. 97; van Mander (note 3), p. 108; Radka Heisslerová (ed.), *Malířský cech Menšího Města pražského: Malostranští umělci v 17. a 18. století* (Prague, 2016), p. 20, note 26.

30 For Spranger's activities in the guild, see Šroněk 1997 (note 22), pp. 98–99, 223–224.

31 Konečný 1997 (note 24), p. 108; Šroněk 1998 (note 22), p. 216.

32 Šroněk 1998 (note 22), p. 216. For Hutský in the guild in Prague, see Šroněk 1997 (note 22), pp. 56–60, 207–208.

33 Kaufmann 1982 (note 15), p. 123.

34 Sekyrka (note 22), pp. 53–54, cat. no. 1.16 (M. Halata); E. Kawakami, The Influence of the Letter of Majesty of Rudolf II in 1595 on the Guilds in Central Europe: A Letter from the Painters' Guild in Hamburg to the Painters' Guild in Prague, *Bijutsushi ronshu (Kobe Review of Art History)* 16 (2016), pp. (1)–(7). In 1644, Wedmann also referred to the 1595 letter and the coat of

4. Cornelis Cort after Federico Zuccari, The Calumny of Apelles, 1572 (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum)

Moreover, Rudolf II ennobled Spranger to a hereditary aristocracy in October 1595, soon after the issuing of the 1595 letter.[35] If this had not incidentally occurred in the same year, and the year had not been so important for the relations between the court and the municipal artists as Konečný suggested,[36] the same seems to apply to Spranger who belonged to both the court and the city; the year and the occurrences would be critical for him too.

Multiple Themes in the Background of The Triumph of Wisdom

Judging from the context of the time, which I examined above, it will be reasonable to suppose that the background of the painting adopts the subjects to proclaim painting to be a liberal art; I therefore suggest that the background has three themes related to Minerva, who is standing in the middle. Spranger's contemporary artists commonly use the goddess for the claim to raise

arms painted by Spranger, in order to avoid entering the Prague painters' guild. Halata (note 22), pp. 136–137 (fol. 120v); Šroněk 1998 (note 22), p. 218.

35 Diez (note 2), p. 146, no. 19; Konečný 1997 (note 24), p. 108; Warnke (note 27), p. 170.

36 Konečný 1997 (note 24), p. 108.

the status of the arts. Painting shows its intellectual nature under her aegis, as in the drawing of Spranger, *Minerva with the Shield of Saint Luke* (c. 1590–1595, Vienna, Albertina).[37]

The first theme to be noticed in *The Triumph of Wisdom* concerns Minerva conquering the tied-up Ignorance. The theme, the triumph of wisdom over vice, belongs to themes that see the visual arts as the liberal arts, as is widely known. The triumph of wisdom in this work should be read in this context. From the late sixteenth century until the early seventeenth century, a number of allegories emphasised the intellectual nature of the visual arts in connection with science. Vices like ignorance and envy prevent the flourishing of the arts in these allegories.[38] It is said that the legend of the calumny of Apelles recorded by Lucian caused this way of viewing.[39] Federico Zuccari, whose works in Caprarola have influenced Spranger, painted *The Calumny of Apelles*.[40] The painting was engraved by Cornelis Cort and the engraving was published in 1572 (Fig. 4). It diffused his unique composition widely.[41] To the left of this composition, a king with donkey ears like Midas is sitting surrounded by the Vices. He embodies ignorance which is hostile to artists. On the contrary, Minerva and Mercury – to the best of my knowledge, they appeared here for the first time in the long tradition of this subject – are their patron gods.[42] Here, the arts prevail against the vices, patronised by Minerva and Mercury.

Artists in Prague also produced art works showing the victory of the intellectual visual arts over ignorance; Spranger depicted *The Triumph of Wisdom over Ignorance and Envy* in 1604 (Fig. 5).[43] Minerva is the patron goddess of the arts as well as the goddess of wisdom. At the feet of her pedestal, Ignorance with donkey ears and Envy with curly serpent-like hair are caught here too. The description of *The Triumph of Wisdom* thus follows in the tradition of the victory of the visual arts over vice, for the figures symbolising muses or the liberal arts surround the pedestal under Minerva in the painting.[44]

The next theme that would be relevant to the painting is Minerva introducing Painting to the Liberal Arts or muses. This theme illustrates the argument that the visual arts, especially painting, are thought to have joined the liberal arts. A typical example is *Minerva Leading Pictura to the Seven Liberal Arts* engraved by Aegidius Sadeler after a model of Hans von Aachen (Fig. 6).[45] Under the patronage of Hercules representing Virtue as the inscription in the print defines it, Minerva introduces Painting by hand towards the

37 *Prag um 1600*, II, pp. 175–176, cat. no. 645 (T. DaCosta Kaufmann); Metzler (note 1), pp. 218–220, cat. no. 130. Minerva with the shield of St. Luke also appears in the other drawings: One example is the copy after Spranger's drawing, *Mercury and Minerva Protect Painting* (Leipzig, Museum der bildenden Künste). Kaufmann 1982 (note 15), pp. 126–127, Fig. 6. Another is found in a drawing of a guild painter Gabriel Šprindler, who was active in Prague between 1601 and 1632. Šroněk 2002 (note 22), pp. 19–20, Fig. 2.

38 *Prag um 1600*, p. 391, cat. no. 264 (Teréz Gerszi).

39 For the theme of the calumny of Apelles, see Richard Förster, Die Verleumdung des Apelles in der Renaissance, *Jahrbuch der Königlich Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 8 (1887), pp. 29–56 and pp. 89–113; 15 (1894), pp. 27–40; J. M. Massing, *Du texte à l'image: la Calomnie d'Apelle et son iconographie* (Strasbourg, 1990); D. Cast, *The Calumny of Apelles: A Study in the Humanist Tradition* [=Yale Publications in the History of Art 28] (New Haven, 1981).

40 Cast (note 39), pp. 121–158; Massing (note 39), pp. 197–217 ; Cristina Acidini Luchinat, *Taddeo e Federico Zuccari: Fratelli pittori del Cinquecento*, II (Milan, 1999), pp. 32–41; *Innocente e calunniato: Federico Zuccari (1539/40 – 1609) e le vendette d'artista*, eds. Cristina Acidini Luchinat and Elena Capretti, exh. cat. (Florence, 2009), pp. 94–99 (Elena Capretti).

41 *TIB* 52 (Supplement), no. 219; *NHDF* 18, Cort, no. 211. Ottaviano, a son of Federico, commented on the depicted motives. Ottaviano Zuccari, *Parallelo tra la Calunnia d'Apelle del Cavalier Federico Zuccari*, 1628, pp. 293–297. Cf. Massing (note 39), pp. 197–200; Acidini Luchinat (note 40), pp. 32–37, 41; *Cornelis Cort: 'constich pleedt-snijder von Horne in Hollandt*, ed. M. Sellink, exh. cat. (Rotterdam, 1994), pp. 195–205, cat. no. 68. Spranger probably knew the print. Kaufmann 1982 (note 15), p. 144, note 32.

42 Kaufmann 1982 (note 15), p. 127 and p. 144, note 32.

43 *Prag um 1600*, p. 391, cat. no. 264; Metzler (note 1), pp. 251–252, cat. no. 155.

44 This description in the inscription on the print after *The Triumph of Wisdom* seems to correspond to the theme: "It is not granted that the ignorant should have admiration for the beautiful arts. Love alone seeking them [the arts] eagerly desires to learn them. The ignorant will not be honored. But it is granted that the ignorant should lie down, trampled by spurned art, and should tumble down deprived of true honor. (Non datur; eximias veneretur ut INSCIVS ARTES. Solus eas quaerens noscere gestit AMOR. INSCIVS NON HONORABITur. Sed datur; ut spreta iaceat calcatus ab ARTE INSCIVS, et solido cassus honore ruat.)" Translated in Metzler (note 1), p. 316.

45 For the engraving, see *NHG*, 1, Aachen, no. 57; *TIB* 72 (1), no. 113; Kaufmann 1982 (note 15), pp. 127–128 and p. 144, note 34; *Prag um 1600*, p. 329, cat. no. 178 (E. Fučíková); Limouze (note 4), pp. 99–100, 129–130; Konečný 1997 (note 24),

5. Bartholomeus Spranger, Triumph of Wisdom over Ignorance and Envy, 1604 (Karlsruhe, Staatliche Kunsthalle)

personifications of the seven liberal arts. Perhaps, introduced here are not only Painting but also the other visual arts, considering the hammer and the female statue, attributes for Sculpture, which lie behind her. Von Aachen also produced a lost painted version listed in the Kunstkammer in Munich, in 1598, and a drawing which has a similar composition.[46] In this drawing, Minerva presents Painting to the muses and Apollo instead. I consider that the change from the muses to the Liberal Arts in the engraving may reflect the issue of the 1595 letter, where painting gained the status of a liberal art according to Konečný.[47]

It is interesting to note the case where the Seven Liberal Arts contain three Visual Arts in a relief of a court sculptor Adriaen de Vries, *Rudolf II Introducing the Liberal Arts to Bohemia* (1609).[48] At the centre of the relief, Rudolf II on horseback extends his hand to Painting with a brush and a palette, Architecture is holding a ruler and a compass, and Sculpture is holding up a hammer and a statuette of Fortuna. Behind them hand in hand, follow the four Liberal Arts. They are seven in total, comparable to the number of the seven liberal arts. An entry in the 1607–1611 inventory for the Prague Kunstkammer attests to it, as can be seen in the following description: "Ein ander bassarilievo di bronzo von Ad: de Fries, ist der röm. kayser RVD: II. zu pferd und folgen ihme die siben freyen künst nach, die presentirt er und das laster ligt ihm under den füssen zu boden, ist auch ein tafel in quadro, Aº 1609".[49] Not merely does it refer, without any doubt, to the Seven Liberal Arts, but it also notes Vice who is lying on the ground. Vice is depicted here with donkey ears, that is, Ignorance. This work, therefore, would also relate with the theme stated first, the triumph of wisdom over vice.

The Triumph of Wisdom can be a preceding example to show such characteristics as the relief of de Vries.[50] A group of the Seven Liberal Arts including three Visual Arts seems to be put together in the painting. Generally, figures around the pedestal in the painting have been interpreted as muses or the liberal arts. Deciphering them as nine muses based on the

pp. 107–108; *Hans von Aachen (1552–1615): Court Artist in Europe*, edited by Thomas Fusenig, exh. cat. (Berlin and Munich, 2010), p. 175, cat. no. 51 (L. Konečný).

46 Brno, Moravská galerie, inv. no. B3222. *Hans von Aachen* (note 45), p. 174, cat. no. 50 (Lubomír Konečný)

47 Ibidem, p. 175; Lubomír Konečný, Hans von Aachen and Lucian: An Essay in Rudolfine Iconography, *Leids Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 1 (1982), pp. 237–258 (240).

48 England, Collection of H. M. Queen Elizabeth II, inv. no. 35858. For the relief, see *Prag um 1600*, II, pp. 73–74, cat. no. 539 (Manfred Leithe-Jasper). Lars Olof Larsson, *Adrian de Vries: Adrianus Fries Hagiensis Batavus* (Vienna, 1967), pp. 49–50, 100, 102 and p. 124, no. 47; Lars Olof Larsson, Bildhauerkunst und Plastik am Hofe Kaiser Rudolfs II., *Leids Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 1 (1982), pp. 211–235 (226).

49 Rotraud Bauer and Herbert Haupt, Das Kunstkammerinventar Kaiser Rudolfs II., 1607–1611, *JKSW* 72 (1976), no. 1983; *Prag um 1600*, II, p. 73.

50 Larsson pointed out that the three visual arts in the relief strongly remind us of Sprager, who probably provided the model. He then mentioned *The Triumph of Wisdom*; around Minerva are "die Vertreter der Künste, zu denen auch die Ma-

number of figures is not available after the emergence of Mercury, since figures around the pedestal except for Bellona and Mercury are eight now. On the other hand, by considering the figure with an astrolabe, Astronomy, and by not including the foreground busts and counting only the figures in the background except for Mercury, the remaining seven figures on both sides of the pedestal correspond to the seven liberal arts including the visual arts.[51]

The last theme to be found in the background is Hermathena, the conjunction of Hermes/Mercury and Athena/Minerva.[52] Since ancient times, Hermathena has been a symbol appropriate for the academy and gymnasium. Later, Renaissance mythographers and emblematists explained it as a union of wisdom and eloquence and it was sometimes decorated *studiolo*. The symbol then travelled northward, to Central Europe and to The Netherlands, where it displayed the features of the patron gods of the arts and artists, for example by holding the caduceus with a brush staff.[53] Minerva and Mercury in *The Triumph of Wisdom* presumably relate to the theme both symbolically and formally.

Symbolically, Hermathena in the painting can connect to the improving position of the visual arts, especially painting.[54] One example of it is a drawing by Sprang-er dating from around 1590.[55] Minerva with a shield extends her hand to give a laurel crown to the kneeling

6. Aegidius Sadeler II after Hans von Aachen, Minerva Leading Pictura to the Seven Liberal Arts (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum)

lerei, die Skulptur und die Architektur zähren." Larsson 1967 (note 48), p. 50.

51 Less figures appeared in Sadeler's engraving after the painting, but they all have attributes instead. At the left of the pedestal, Music is holding musical instruments, Astronomy is holding up an astrolabe and Mercury has a caduceus in his hand. At the right, three personifications of the visual arts appeared. It may allow the engraving not to bear seven figures, in order to allude to them as liberal arts, which makes it possible to put the same number of figures in each side to show their equality.

52 For Hermathena, see Thea Vignau-Wilberg, *Die emblematischen Elemente im Werke Joris Hoefnagels*, I (Leiden, 1969), pp. 195–198, 263–264; Kaufmann 1982 (note 15), pp. 119–148; Elizabeth McGrath, Rubens's Musathena, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 50 (1987), pp. 233–245; *Kaufmann*, pp. 44–54; Elizabeth See Watson, *Achille Bocchi and the Emblem Book as Symbolic Form* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 143–147; Günter Irmscher, 'Hermathena' in Prag und München, *München – Prag um 1600*, eds. Beket Bukovinská and Lubomír Konečný [= Studia Rudolphina – Sonderheft] (Prague, 2009), pp. 77–101; Enrico Parlato, Hermathena nelle Imagini di Vincenzo Cartari e nei libri illustrati del secondo Cinquecento, *Vincenzo Cartari e le direzioni del mito nel Cinquecento*, ed. Sonia Maffei (Rome, 2013), pp. 229–244.

53 Joris Hoefnagel, *Allegory for Abraham Ortelius* (Antwerp, Stedelijk Prentenkabinett, inv. no. 535). A caduceus with a maulstick staff is depicted in *Mercury* by Hendrick Goltzius in 1611. The pendant of the painting is *Minerva* in 1611, and two years later he added *Hercules and Cacus*. A drawing entitled *Mercury and Minerva* (Chur, Landolt Collection) made as early as 1588 is a compelling template for the 1611 paintings. The three paintings belong to the Hague Royal Cabinet of Paintings Mauritshuis (on loan to the Frans Hals Museum in Haarlem). *Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617): Drawings, Prints and Paintings*, ed. Huigen Leeflang, exh. cat. (Zwolle, 2003), pp. 290–293, cat. no. 106; Kaufmann 1982 (note 15), p. 138, Fig. 11.

54 Kaufmann pointed out that "the image of Hermathena in Rudolfine art can be connected with a number of other contemporary allegories in which the visual arts consort with the muses or liberal arts." Kaufmann 1982 (note 15), p. 127.

55 Vienna, Albertina, inv. no. 25437. *Kaufmann*, p. 53; *Prag um 1600*, II, p.176, cat. no. 646; *Rudolf II and Prague*, p. 667,

Impigro Iuveni ſpecioſo pelle bovinâ
Condecorat caput & lauro Palmaq. Minerva,
Mercurio ductore, opibus ditatur abunde
Quem labor & ſtudium ingenuas conducit ad artes,
Famaq. cum ſuper Æthera. & Mortalia tollit!
Invide ſegnis, Iners arctis frœnabere habenis.
A. Clutius.
B. Spranger Schidia hæc pro themate G. Sprang. CID.ID.XCII tunc adulescenti D.D. Qui
poſtmodum ea divulgans maiori natu filio ſuo Math Sprang C.D. sculptore I. Mullero. CID.ID.CXXVIII

7. Jan Muller after Bartholomeus Spranger, Young Artist in front of Minerva, 1628 (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum)

Mercury in the guise of an artist, holding a maulstick and a scroll. While Mercury himself is a painter here, Mercury introduces a painter to Minerva in another example: the engraving of Jan Muller after the design of Spranger, *Young Artist before Minerva* (Fig. 7). The inscription on the print indicates that Spranger made the model for his nephew in 1592, much earlier than the print engraved in 1628. Here Mercury leads an industrious and educated young artist, as an ox-hide over his shoulder and a book at his feet show, toward Minerva, who looks like she is about to crown the artist. Behind her throne, vices identified as Ignorance, Envy and perhaps Sloth are under restraint;[56] that will also associate with the first theme, the triumph of wisdom over vice. Having considered that Hermathena in his works alludes to the increasing prestige of the arts, we can conclude that Hermathena in *The Triumph of Wisdom* probably means as such.

Furthermore, it is possible that Hermathena in the painting formally follows a certain pattern, that of embracing Hermathena; both gods have one arm around each other's shoulders and their legs overlap. Since the earliest example of Renaissance Hermathena, a publisher's device of Gualtiero Scoto in Venice used from c. 1551 (Fig. 8),[57] some emblem books and mythographies in Italy such as those of Ruscelli, Cartari and Fabricii are likely to take on the pattern.[58] In Central Europe, the gods in Aegidius Sadeler's engraving after Hans von Aachen, *Cursus: Hermes and Athena on a Pedestal* (Fig. 9), inherit almost the same pose.[59]

cat. no. I.279 (Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann); Metzler (note 1), pp. 221–222, cat. no. 132.

56 *TIB* 4, no. 67; *NHDF, The Muller Dynasty, II*, no. 67; Oberhuber (note 1), p. 155 f., 291; Kaufmann 1982 (note 15), p. 126; *Prag um 1600*, pp. 425–426, cat. no. 319 (L. Konečný); *Rudolf II and Prague*, p. 179; Metzler (note 1), pp. 306–308, cat. no. 194.

57 *Catalogue of Books and Manuscripts: Italian 16th Century Books*, ed. R. Mortimer, II (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1974), pp. 620–621; Irmscher (note 52), p. 81 and 97, note 30. This device is registered in EDIT16. The identification numbers are CNCM16, CNCM1536 and CNCM1959. See http://edit16.iccu.sbn.it/web_iccu/ihome.htm (last visit 28. 1. 2014)

58 G. Ruscelli, *Le imprese illustri* (Venice, 1556), pp. 284–285; V. Cartari, *Le imagini de i dei de gli antichi* (Venice, 1571), p. 356, pl. 57, eds. G. Auzzas et al. (Vicenza, 1996), pp. 318–319, pl. 57; P. Fabricii, *Delle allusioni, imprese et emblemi ... di Gregorio XIII* (Rome, 1588), p. 32, Lib. 1, Tit. 3, Allus. 6. I discussed the pattern during sixteenth and early seventeenth century from Italy to Central Europe, focusing on the change of motives on which the two gods stand in one of my articles. First, the motives under their feet are a dice and a book, then they stand on a pedestal, and finally there is a case which has both prior features. Moreover, I examined the possibility that a dice under the foot of Mercury changes to a pedestal on which both gods stand, since the dice on which Mercury steps in the title page of the Fabricii's book in 1588 has spots but that one found in a portrait of Heinrich Khunrath in his book *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae* (Hanau, 1609), which was probably copied after the former, becomes just a cube. E. Kawakami, The Meaning of Objects under the Feet of Hermathena, *Bijutsushi ronshu (Kobe Review of Art History)* 14 (2014), pp. 102–116.

59 For the engraving, see Jacoby (note 45), no. 58; *TIB* 72 (1), no. 116; Gerszi (note 7) pp. 758–759; Vignau-Wilberg (note 52), 1, pp. 195–198; *Kaufmann*, p. 92; *Prag um 1600*, pp. 421–422 (L. Konečný); *Rudolf II and Prague*, p. 459, cat. no. I.341 (D. Limouze); McGrath (note 52), p. 242; Irmscher (note 52), pp. 85–89; *Hans von Aachen* (note 45), pp. 178–179, cat. no. 53 (J. Jacoby); T. DaCosta Kaufmann, *The Mastery of*

8. The publisher's device of Gualtiero Scoto on the title page of Pietro Bembo's *Historiae Venetae libri XII* (Venice, 1551)

9. Aegidius Sadeler II after Hans von Aachen, Cursus: Hermes and Athena on a Pedestal, ca. 1590 (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum)

Minerva's pose in *The Triumph of Wisdom* may draw inspiration from that of Mercury in *Cursus* in mirror-image. By applying Mercury's pose to Minerva, the painter might allude to the Hermathenic theme on the central stage. In addition, both Minerva in the painting and Mercury (and Minerva) in the engraving are standing on a pedestal. A pedestal attributes to Mercury as Fabricii mentioned in an epigram for the emblem of Hermathena.[60] Therefore it is possible that Mercury in the painting, resting his arm on a pedestal, could imply this.

To conclude, in the background of *The Triumph of Wisdom*, Minerva treading on Ignorance shows the victory of the educated artists and the visual arts they produced. The seven figures on both sides of her pedestal allude to the Seven Liberal Arts which include the three Visual Arts, due to their number except for Mercury. Whereas all the figures in Sadeler's engraving after this work hold their attributes, every figure in the painting does not have them. Instead of clearly defining figures by attributes, the number of figures in the painting can imply the personifications. Furthermore,

Nature: Aspects of Art, Science, and Humanism in the Renaissance (Princeton, 1993), p. 89.

60 Beside the passage "Ferma l'alate piante Herme facondo / Nel quadro Marmo", the note mentioned that "Figura quadrata Mercurio data, artium firmitate significat." It refers to the other related emblem (p. 179, Lib. 3, Tit. 4, Allus. 7) after that. Fabricii (note 58), p. 32.

their arrangement is important. Placing the personifications of the visual arts on the right of Hermathena, who is in the centre, and those of the liberal arts on the opposite side, can be interpreted as showing the equivalent status between them; namely, it brings forth the argument of considering painting the liberal arts. In this respect, the background refers to the most valuable part in the 1595 letter for painters.

Conclusion – Reinterpretation of The Triumph of Wisdom

The interpretation of the whole painting's meaning requires the consideration of the foreground composed of the war goddess Bellona and History. For it, I find myself able to agree with Oberhuber's suggestion: the two female figures in the foreground represent the two sides of the ruler's wisdom, in war, and in science and the arts. They show, namely, Rudolf II as *ex utroque Caesar*, a ruler in war and peace.[61] In addition to his interpretation, Capricorn, which Müller found in front of the pedestal in 1994, should be taken into account now.[62] Since Capricorn is the zodiac sign of Rudolf II, a modern equivalent to the Roman Emperor Augustus, that in *The Triumph of Wisdom* connects the general image of *ex utroque Caesar* to Rudolf II. Indeed, he promoted the justice of his cause for the Turkish War, and at the same time, he was proud of his well-known art collection. This would also apply to the background, which not only emphasises the re-evaluation of the status of painting that painters achieved, but also admires the cultural policy of Rudolf II owing to Capricorn.

The foreground therefore admires the reign of Rudolf II as modern Augustus in war and in science. On the contrary, the background expresses his specific policy, the 1595 letter. There can be identified threefold themes related to the increasing status of the visual arts. First, in the centre Minerva shows the victory of the intellectual visual arts, by conquering Ignorance. Second, Minerva turns also to Hermathena with Mercury at her feet; the theme also connects to the high status of the arts. Third, seven figures on both sides of Minerva except for Mercury will correspond to the Seven Liberal Arts, which include the three Visual Arts; in this respect, the configuration also shows the equality between them, placing the Liberal Arts to the left of Hermathena and the Visual Arts to the right. Here they can be seen as declaring the statement of the 1595 letter.

61 Oberhuber (note 1), p. 153.
62 Müller (note 1), p. 50.